The
COMMONWEAL
A Weekly Review of Literature the Arts and Public Affairs
FOUNDED BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

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Week by Week

THE REPORT of the President's Commission on Labor Relations in Sweden, which was promised for early release at the time of the publication of the commision's report on British labor relations, has now been made public and deserves the same careful consideration and sympathetic study as was urged for the earlier document. In many ways the pattern which has emerged from nearly fifty years of Swedish experience is very similar to that which has developed in England: the national unions, both industrial and craft, are largely participants in a national confederation; employers are similarly federated. Collective bargaining is effected by agreements between the employers in an industry as a whole and the workers in the same industry as a whole, and such agreements are effective throughout each industry even as regards employers who are not members of the federation and workers who are not members of a union. The government maintains an elaborate machinery for the conciliation of disputes; arbitration is uncommon, since both parties prefer to retain the right to strike or to lock out, but in effect much the same purpose as is effected by arbitration in England is achieved by conciliation in Sweden. The closed shop is unknown, largely because each interest recognizes to the fullest extent the right of the other to organize. Perhaps the most interesting thing in the report is the account of Sweden's solution of her housing problem. The workingman can borrow from the municipality 90 percent of the cost of his prospective home; the remaining 10 percent may be paid in his own labor on the house. Lots are much larger than ours—about 60 by 90 feet. Title in the land remains in the municipality, which charges a small ground rent, thus retaining unearned increments for the community, which makes them possible. The building loan carries 4½ percent interest and is amortized over a period of thirty years. In practise this means decent housing within the means of the worker, something we have certainly not yet achieved in this country.

Sweden's Employers and Workers

HAPPILY it has just been announced that a concerted effort is under way to bring the cost of private home construction to within the worker's means in this country also. With building material and housing fixture manufacturers taking the initiative, and with the collaboration of the government, the aim is to produce a five-room house which can be erected in most parts of the country for only $2,500 and will involve carrying charges of only $25 per month. Such a house, it appears, would not be strictly of the pre-fabricated variety, but the economies of that standardization which now characterizes the innards of the American home and, to a lesser extent, outward accoutrements such as windows, trim and door-latches, would be utilized for the house as a whole. Observers like the *Architectural Forum* believe that there is a psychological antipathy to standardized housing, and the gimcrack variations noted in so many speculative developments would tend to substantiate the contention, but a pleasing effect of unity amid variety can be achieved through planting, landscaping and other feats of husbandry. The latest plans for a test group of 100,000 low-cost dwellings throughout the nation in 1939 envisages 10 basic housing designs with homes erected as in Tompkinsville, Nova Scotia, in groups of ten. Building supplies and fixtures would be contracted for through some central agency all in a lump. Revival in the nation's major industries would be one effect of the successful accomplishment of this scheme; its greatest possibilities are for the families involved.

Low-cost Homes in the U. S. A.

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"The Sons of Martha"

TWENTY Christian centuries of sanctifying work and duty have not kept the Gospel story of the supper at Bethany from being misread—even by some who would scruple to admit it—as an endorsement of selfishness. The Sons-of-Martha tradition, for all its humor, has risen as a revulsion to this supposed teaching. Thus the New York *Times,* praising warmly and deservedly the men who worked at great risk against hurricane and flood, assigns them, by the grace of Kipling, to a high place among the busy sister's progeny, who toil "not as a ladder from earth to heaven, not as a witness to any creed, but simple service, simply given, etc." Strictly in passing, we wonder how the *Times* knows. There were a good many men on the job; they cannot all have been questioned as to their motives. And also in passing, even the motive of love of men for the love of God has produced some efficacious results, as in Francis of Assisi, Vincent de Paul, Damien of Molokai. But that is not our point. We wish to utter a word of reminder as to what we really know about Saint Martha of Bethany. We are taught that she represents the active life, as her sister does the contemplative; that she is a powerful intercessor and a helper in works of charity. An unbroken tradition makes her the evangelizer of Provence, and a pleasant legendary addendum has her subduing, by force of her Christian virtue, the dragon of Tarascon. The Gospel story itself is, of course, to be read with a full sense of the realities it contains. Martha was not so much the unselfish ministrant at that moment as she was the oblivious bustler. For it was no ordinary guest who came to the house at Bethany. It was the Wisdom and the Word of God, the soul's Beginning and its End, before Whom it must first of all hearken and be still. But that Christ's gentle rebuke, "Mary has chosen the best part," fell on rich soil we see in Martha's deepening sense of His Divinity, which merited that she hear the wonderful words: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." No—Martha has not deserved to mother the tradition of a race of heroic outcasts from grace, duty-doing stepchildren of heaven.

Walnuts and Other Surpluses

WIND and frost, sunshine and water, harmful insects and bacteria have a way of rendering uncertain the most studied estimates of agricultural experts. The favorable conditions of 1938 together with the American system of cash-crop, mass-production farming have brought forth some of the largest surpluses in our checkered agricultural history. More than ever today there is abundance of the earth's goods in the United States, dire poverty in many sectors of the globe—due to war, rearmament and crop failures. Distribution from our vast surpluses to the needy of many lands has hardly ever been so clearly indicated despite the genuine difficulties involved in such a transfer. The circuit court decision in San Francisco permitting the distribution of surplus walnuts to charitable agencies points to one method of putting nature's bounty to good use, but the walnut growers are the only producers' association with a board empowered to dispose of surpluses through channels that will not compete with normal trade. The Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation has recently made substantial purchases of farm products in twenty-two states for distribution in the Eastern hurricane disaster areas. Finally, sizable shipments of flour for destitute civilians on both sides of the battle lines in Spain and in war-torn China, through the collaboration of public and private agencies, have been announced. Some progress toward the solution of the problem of poverty amid abundance would be possible through committees similar to those of the walnut growers.

Sugar Cane and Sawdust

AS FAR as the farmers themselves are concerned other developments of the week offered greater promise than Red Cross purchases for war victims. Most spectacular of these was the successful tryout of a homemade sugar cane harvester capable of doing the work of fifty to sixty men and revolutionizing an economy carried on in the same primitive fashion since sugar cane was introduced into this country in 1795. Cheering as this is to the cane growers, the manufacture of this machine will bring its own problems of technological displacement if its introduction is not integrated into the economy of the district. Of wider import is the announcement of a process discovered by four research men of the Department of Agriculture, that in three hours will convert such waste products as straw, sawdust, sugar cane stalks and wood waste into invaluable plastics. The residue is a dense, shiny black substance like glass, impervious to moisture and water, a good insulator and very durable. Buttons, door knobs, steering wheels and radio panels are among the products envisaged for this new material and plastics are believed to be only in their infancy today. Another industrial use for agricultural products is indicated in the plans of Aroostook Potato Products of Houlton, Maine, to produce starch for New England manufacturers. This development fits in well with the long-range program of decentralization and part-time homesteading. The erection of small factories in rural areas, a scheme long advocated by none other than Henry Ford, would supply the cash requirements of many families whose farms make them all but self-sufficient. It is one of the most practical methods of achieving integration of industry and agriculture.

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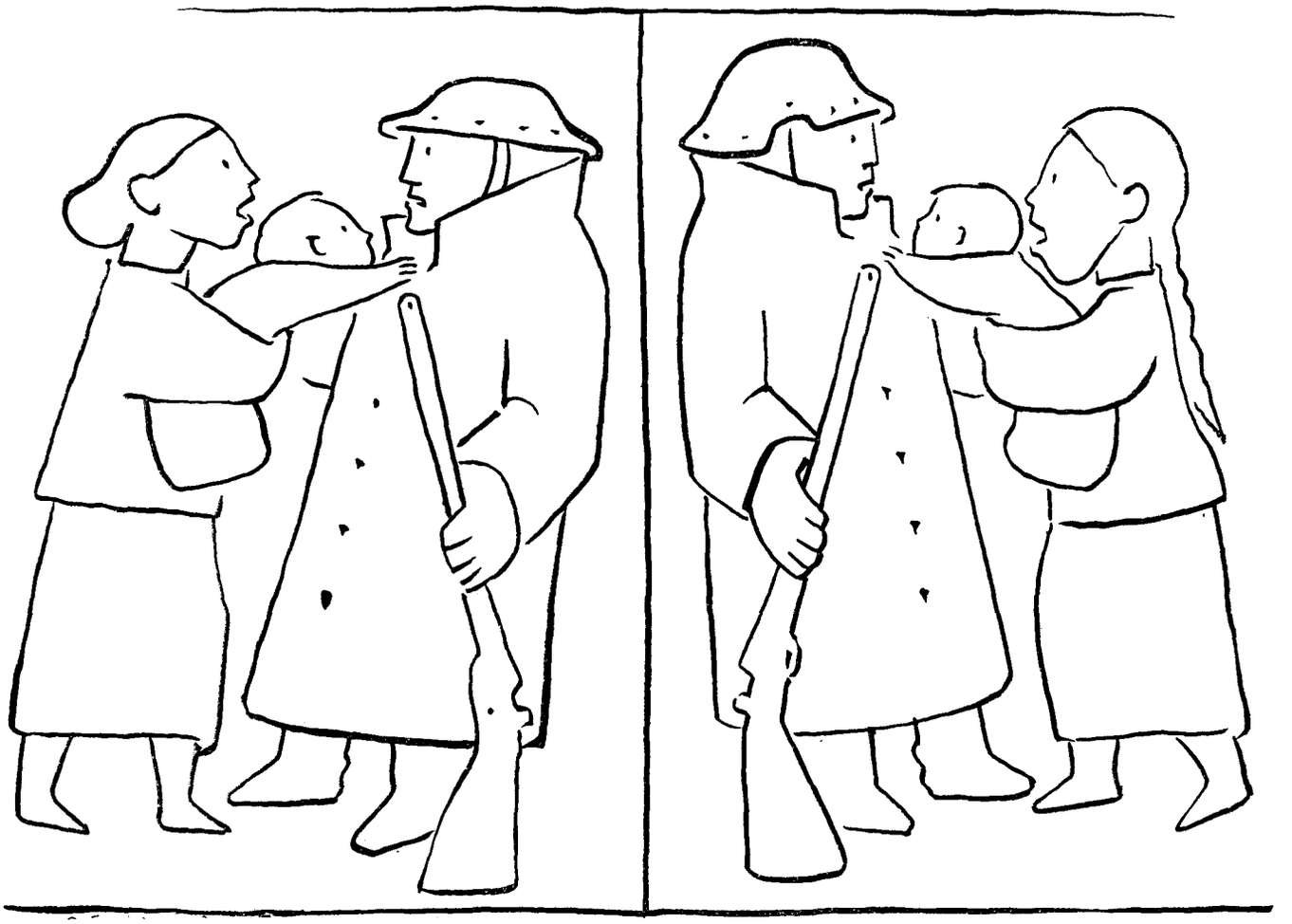

They Look Alike

Our Railroad Mess

THAT highly unstable equilibrium which is the economic condition of our railroads now seems likely to end in an upset, one way or the other, before the new year. Decreases in traffic — carloadings are currently about 20 percent less than last year and 30 percent less than in 1930, and passenger revenues have fallen off despite the increase in rates allowed a few months ago—and increases in material costs have made it increasingly difficult for the roads to meet their fixed charges, and that despite government help. At present about one-third of our lines are in bankruptcy or reorganization, and the attitude of the investing public toward the situation is reflected in the debased price level of all railroad securities. Management, which seems today to be of a very different caliber from what it was in the days of the giants, takes a defeatist attitude toward the whole problem and blames factors over which it has no control — chiefly government, for interference and taxation, and labor, for receiving a disproportionate wage, which is claimed to be the highest in history. Labor, using a different statistical base, claims that management is too much in the financial interest, that railroads are making profits, and that wages are disproportionately low.

IN THE explicit situation there has long been expected a fight between labor and management; the proposal of a 15-percent wage cut late last spring was the first foray of the war. Under the complex machinery set up by law for settling railway labor disputes, no quick action is possible. We are only now reaching the crucial stages in the process with the appointing by the President of an unbiased fact-finding commission to investigate the allegations of both sides. By December 1, this commission's report must have been submitted and consequent action looking toward settlement initiated. Thereafter, if no compromise has been worked out, labor is free to strike, management to impose its wage cut. The dispute is so complex that we cannot see how anyone could, in the present state of the case, say where justice lies. Much that management claims is true. The railroads' tax burden is still inequitable.

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Labor has a case in the shameful financial practises which, until only yesterday, were creating cancers in the railway body which must, eventually, be removed or cause death. The one apparent fact is that we still need railroads; to keep them alive, someone will have to pay the bill; the underlying problem now is to determine who the bill payers shall be, and in what proportion.

Shylocks or Joint Adventurers

OF PARTICULAR interest in connection with the sad state of our railroads was an eminently realistic and intelligent paper prepared by Jerome M. Frank of the SEC for the meeting of the National Association of Securities Commissioners in Kansas City in late September. The great cyclonic disturbances of men's minds and bodies in Europe and America conspired to focus our attention away from such things, but what Mr. Frank had to say, and the fact that what he said admittedly indicates one of the long-term lines which will be pursued in the monopoly investigation and by the SEC, deserved a more auspicious moment. It is no new thesis that much of the instability of our present economic structure arises from the great pool of fixed interest bearing securities through which so much of American and foreign enterprise is financed. Almost every department of business and industry has produced its crop of bonded indebtedness and its concomitant bond-holders, who are in law and in effect creditors of the enterprise involved rather than joint adventurers in it. Everyone knows that the real value and availability of any currency will vary tremendously within a relatively short period; yet any given bond interest remains constant. And this means that in good times financing through bonds is a cheap way of getting capital, because it is easy to meet the fixed charges, whereas in bad times it becomes destructively expensive, because it may be crushingly hard to meet them. Yet the suggestion that our economy should shift its financial center of gravity more in the direction of equity financing and away from bonded indebtedness has always been greeted by the hard-headed as visionary. It is encouraging to find such views held—or at least strongly suggested—by a man whose position is such as to ensure them a hearing.

Social Security or $30 a Week?

POLITICAL opponents of the administration continue to poke fun at various aspects of the Social Security program. It is whispered about that wages are being taxed to run the government and that none of the astronomical sums contemplated twenty-five years hence will ever be repaid. Obtainable data would not seem to warrant such a conclusion, but as Mr. Albert Linton declares in the October *Atlantic* and as the *Christian Century* editorializes in the current issue, the system is open to grave objections on other scores. To begin with, the aged are inadequately provided for today, with only 1,000,000 now receiving pensions—pensions which average only $19 per month. Under the Social Security system pensions do not begin until 1942 and then at $10 a month. For, as Mr. Linton points out, benefits are returned according to life insurance principles—that is, the individual receives only so much as he has paid in, plus accrued interest. Great Britain, on the other hand, bases her system on genuine social insurance, basing payments instead on the needs of society. Mr. Linton sees no need of piling up such huge sums, even if only on paper, but would recommend paying adequate pensions right now with reserves always kept down to a sum needed for two or three years' payments. The country is increasingly social security conscious and when the promised payments are not forthcoming it will turn to such variations of the Townsend plan as are now proposed to the voters of California, Oregon and Ohio and will undoubtedly figure in the balloting next month in many states. Voting down such panaceas in November and amending the Social Security act to provide adequate pensions now would seem to be much in order.

Fear of Force

PRIME MINISTER CHAMBERLAIN said on September 28: "However much one may sympathize with a small nation confronted by a big and powerful nation, we cannot in all circumstances undertake to involve the whole British Empire in a war simply on that account. If we have to fight, it must be on larger issues than that. . . . But if I were convinced that any nation had made up its mind to dominate the world by fear of its force, I should feel that it must be resisted." This cannot be accepted as a clear signpost pointing to the "cause" of the crisis.

* * * *

Hitler's answer to President Roosevelt's first telegram seemed to be inevitable. The allies certainly furnished the premises for this argument. The President's second cable, a more useful and powerful message, was surely wise in putting aside "the question of errors of judgment or of injustices committed in the past." It is impossible now for men or nations, to atone for, or to balance between each other, past sins. It appears unrealistic for either side to base its contentions on the pure justice of its policies. The Chamberlain formula, "fear of force," is more applicable. What kept Germany relatively so peaceful for fifteen years?

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The action of the philosophic liberals has been ironic to the last degree. Ten years ago, five years ago, even three years ago, it would have seemed completely unbelievable to the "liberals" that magazines would, in September of 1938, receive appeals from a "Save Czechoslovakia" committee which had behind it the practically unanimous backing of "liberal" names, for the propagation of an intransigeant front to protect little Czechoslovakia from the German monster. Alas, little Belgium: what did you teach? The military front is more united now than at the time of the World War. The most dramatic change is undoubtedly in the proletarian movement. Right up to the hostilities of the World War the bulk of the socialists were out of line with the official nationalisms, and a large section maintained pacifism and defeatism even afterward. Now the absolute leader in the war front is the Communist International, and only a tiny section of the most severe socialist revolutionaries are against the international war. But under fire, how long will real and serious defeatism be delayed? Are the internal conditions of the various countries so much healthier, more prosperous, creative and unified than in 1914?

* * * *

The relative democracy of Hitler's and Chamberlain's methods is about as one. Hitler was the first to go to the people. His demagogy thrusts aside secret agreements. He works directly on the people with a mass party. Only at the last moment did Chamberlain address the public itself. Hitler's protestation that beyond the Sudeten regions Germany had no European territorial aspirations is too completely discounted. A mass politician cannot teach the people that and then facilely retract. The jokers, of course, fly by the dozen out of both sleeves. Is the Ukraine European or Asiatic in Third Reich atlases? Helot states can of course not be incorporated into the pure blood German imperium, but they can look German from outside the imperium and from inside their own paper borders.

The masses in the "democracies" had unprecedented opportunity to express themselves on the issue of war or peace. The information fed to them, however limited and distorted, was incomparably fuller and truer than that served by Reich propaganda. One of the most dramatic features of the crisis in America was the radio treatment. All three chains gave it almost miraculous coverage. The Mutual's rebroadcast of the official state English-language newscasts from European capitals seemed most dramatic of all. It is hard to believe that Americans have ever heard anything as offensive as the messages from Berlin.

The announcer's utter serenity and calmness, absolute disregard of any conflicting point of view or assemblage of fact was maddening. Starting the broadcast after Godesberg with a rhapsody on the lovely weather was a masterpiece. The line was clear and absolute throughout. Britain and France were cooperating with Hitler in a vague and amiable way to keep the "intellectually inferior" Czechs from disrupting Europe. The "Red horde" of the Czech army, prodded by Moscow, was working for a catastrophe (cátastrof). The announcer knew only what he read in English and French newspapers and the things that could blandly be assumed as common knowledge about the "so-called Czechoslovak state that was created by dictated treaties at the end of the Great War," and had now, under Red influence, "practically dissolved itself into its component parts." The women and children of Sudetenland were, naturally, being "frightfully mishandled" by the communist terrorists. . . . Hitler is democratic in working directly through the masses but how beautifully he arranges what kind of mobs the masses become.

* * * *

It is a fact that Americans accept with hardly any disturbance the domination of Europe by England and France and that we find unbearable and unthinkable its domination by Germany. This is explainable on historical grounds easily enough, and can be rationalized fairly convincingly. In the contemporary era England and France have been able to dominate only through combinations which they did not absolutely control. And the purposes of their domination were primarily to protect and even create markets and an atmosphere comfortable for their own manner of looking at things, and, for France, to guarantee her strategic position. They appreciated unfair advantages in the markets, but the markets kept recognizable characteristics of liberal freedom. Germany dominates by herself, or threatens to do so, and not so clearly for the sake of a market, and surely not to create an atmosphere in which Whiggism is comfortable.

The last minute Four Power conference was welcomed by all groups, even those who, previous to the current Hitler tantrum, held it anathema. The logic of the situation is inexorable. If a showdown is forced (whether now or later), the different ideological states must either arrange to exist with each other, or must have a knockout war, eliminating one or two of the ideological state structures. That is not a constructive way to test ideologies and would be completely inconclusive in determining their ultimate fate. (Is it possible to remember the World War?) There are deeper and more powerful currents in human events than military history. No nation on earth can dominate the world by fear of its force, and a nation's force is not in her arms.

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The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

By BISHOP EDWIN V. O'HARA

UNDER the distinguished patronage of the Most Reverend Maurice F. McAuliffe, D.D., there is being held at Hartford, Connecticut, during the opening days of October the annual National Catechetical Congress of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. The editors of THE COMMONWEAL have suggested that those who may not be able to attend the Hartford congress, would welcome a brief explanation of the work and purposes of the confraternity.

For a clear understanding of what follows it must be borne in mind that the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine is essentially a parish society of laymen and laywomen organized under the direction of the pastor for the religious instruction of children and adults who are not enrolled in Catholic schools whether on the elementary, high school or college level. The establishment of the confraternity in each parish is required by Canon 711 of the Code of Canon Law. In each diocese the parish confraternities are under the supervision of a diocesan director appointed by the Ordinary. A national center of the confraternity has been set up by the bishops with an office in the National Catholic Welfare Conference at Washington. The purpose of the national center is to be of service to the confraternity program in the various dioceses. Among other activities, the national center promotes annually a National Catechetical Congress. Such congresses have been held at St. Paul, Minnesota, Rochester, New York, New York City and St. Louis, Missouri. This year the catechetical congress is at Hartford and in 1939 it will be held at Cincinnati.

When I received THE COMMONWEAL'S invitation to write this article I was in northern Montana, about halfway on a tour of an even thousand miles attending on seven successive days seven district meetings of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. Each district meeting was attended by all the parish clergy and by considerable representations of men, women and youth from each of the several parishes and scores of missions comprised in the district. When I say that many of the delegations came more than a hundred miles to attend the meetings I think that the interest of the laity in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine will be sufficiently indicated. It is this interest in the religious instruction of children and adults in a hundred dioceses that finds expression in the National Catechetical Congress.

What are the main fields to be cultivated by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine?

There is, in the first place, the religious instruction of hundreds of thousands of Catholic children who are not attending Catholic schools. The confraternity is devoted both to the year round instruction of these children and to their intensive religious training in the religious vacation school. In the reports of the activities to which I listened last week at the district meetings mentioned above, there figured hundreds of fishers (home visitors) who sought out the religiously underprivileged children in the highways and byways; other hundreds of helpers who provided transportation or assembled materials of visual or dramatic religious instruction, and an equal number of lay teachers who gave of their time and their talent. The amazing thing about the religious vacation schools is the large and continuous attendance of children at these schools whenever they are competently set up, whether in city or country. In view of the enormous success of the religious vacation schools in a hundred dioceses, it would be invidious to mention the confraternity activity of any one diocese in particular except to note that Los Angeles, a pioneer in this field, still has the banner for attendance.

A more difficult field which is now occupying the forefront of confraternity attention is the religious instruction of Catholic children attending public high schools. This field is vast and most important as well as difficult. Probably three-fourths of Catholic high school youth in the United States are not in Catholic schools. While many of these have received a Catholic elementary education, they all face the problem of thinking their religious problems through as adults or of suffering the consequence of facing the adult world inadequately prepared for the conflict of ideas they will meet there. The most promising efforts of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine to prepare public high school youth for this inevitable conflict has been along the lines of the weekly religious discussion clubs which assemble the youth in small groups under competent discussion leaders. It may be expected that the most interesting reports at the Hartford congress will be concerned with efforts to cope with this most critical problem. It is hoped that the move to provide release periods for the religious instruction of public high school youth may be extended in many states. But the real problem will still remain to be solved, namely, how to bring competently trained teachers or leaders to meet this group of young people with an adequate program for religious instruction that will capture the generous loyalty of youth. This is no task for the

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faint-hearted. It involves the fullest possible extension of Catholic high schools and the concurrent application of apostolic zeal, intelligence and cooperative effort to reach without delay the army of youth of high school age who will continue to be in public schools, employed in industry, or (to make the solution still more difficult) unemployed.

In recent years our people have become conscious of the possibilities of adult education. In the program of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine adult religious education has already attained a degree of success through the organization of adult religious discussion clubs (see COMMONWEAL for September 28, 1934: article, "The Religious Study Clubs"). These clubs, composed of about ten members each, meet weekly for ten weeks in the fall and for an equal session in the spring. A discussion club chairman appointed by the pastor, enrolls and prepares a number of "leaders" in the parish who undertake to assemble groups of men and women to study cooperatively a religious text appointed for the season. Under the inspiration of diocesan directors of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and with the cordial cooperation of the reverend pastors, these religious discussion clubs are now functioning in more than a thousand parishes. It is no longer a question of one or two clubs in a parish. There are many parishes throughout the United States in which regular fall and spring sessions of from twenty-five to seventy-five religious discussion clubs are a normal part of parish routine. While many of these groups are composed exclusively of women or of men, there is a growing tendency to establish mixed groups. Thus, two or three families provide the nucleus for a club. A special advantage of this arrangement is that husband and wife are present at the same club and the subject studied there provides a topic for continued religious discussion in the home to the great edification and instruction of the children.

This brings us naturally to another large field of confraternity endeavor: namely, that of helping parents to teach religion to their own children in their home. This department is known as the parent educator. Here, of course, as Pope Pius XI so eloquently inculcated in his encyclical on Christian education, we are concerned with the basic school of religion. Under the auspices of many parish Confraternities of Christian Doctrine, scores of young (and older) mothers and fathers are gathered regularly to study the religious literature available for children and to familiarize themselves with what they themselves may do to provide religious instruction in their own home. Many such groups of Catholic parents are recording their thrilling "discoveries" in this field and the little annual volume of the "Parent Educator," published by the National Center of the Confraternity, promises to bring their inspiration to many other parents.

In this brief article it has been, naturally impossible to speak of the form of organization of the parish Confraternity of Christian Doctrine; the spiritual privileges of its members, the work of the diocesan directors, and of the national center, or of affiliation of the work with the archconfraternity in Rome. Nor is the work of the confraternity without its scholarly aspects. At Hartford there are meeting groups of historians and Scripture scholars as well as theologians and Christian apologists who are making their contribution to its national services. Then, too, hundreds of teaching religious mingle in the sessions with zealous laymen and laywomen from every section of the country. Priests and members of the hierarchy in goodly numbers from both the United States and Canada take an active part in the deliberations. It is not too much to say that the entire Church in America will be placed under a debt of gratitude to the Bishop of Hartford as a result of the National Catechetical Congress assembled under his able patronage.

Spring Evening: The Turtle Sings

Haunter of pools, swamps, slough,
under the vernal alder boughs,
you garrulous complainer:

under the hornbeam and the willow,
where arrow-leaves lie still in stiller water,
where marigolds burn,
you secret mocker—
dark, secret dark,
with evening star's bright eye
the only seeing gleam:

singing your love song in April air,
you hidden mocker:
companion of peepers, woodcocks, nighthawks,
chortler, you hidden chuckler,
you hidden maker of a long-time complaint:
singer of spring in April's dusk,
singer of afterglow, praiser of early moon,
the westering wanderer—

singer of earth's spring,
you haunter of the dark's dark water,
secret,
you hidden,
complainer to the moon, you mocker:

what is your love to April,
what to me,
that April rises white, by night,
and blood pulses, pulses,
prisoned, mad for flight?

AUGUST DERLETH.

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Accent on Community

By CHARLES MORROW WILSON

THIS nation was pioneered by seeding and multiplication of rural communities. Some of them grew into cities and towns. Others merged, shifted or died. Yet the community remains an atomic unit in rural America today. Beyond corporate limits of cities and towns, the United States remains a hodgepodge of some 100,000 rural or semi-rural communities. Today, as for most of the past two centuries, accent upon community is primarily a rural accent. But this may not be the case indefinitely. During the past decade the city community center has shown increasing importance but is still difficult to evaluate as an American phenomenon. It is a superimposed segment of a far greater structure. In the majority of instances its vitality is not yet well enough tested to be convincingly appraised.

However, in city and country alike, the uses of the word "community" have strayed rhetoric miles from basic definitions. Such phrases as "for the good of the community," "community chest," "community spirit," etc., have become motto terms for booster clubs and municipal politics. Legal language, and editorial pages alike, have tended to make "community" a mere synonym for "body politic."

While in part justified by current dictionary definition, the implication that community is merely "any body of persons having common interest or interests" is hardly apropos of the word's prevalent importance. A workable and modern American definition of community must picture free men democratically combined for furtherance of group interest and feasible benefit. Such a definition is deliberately chosen for purposes of this article. Of necessity, too, our term "community" implies the adjective "rural."

American pioneers clustered together in communities for defense from the wilderness. When literal frontiers vanished, the humors of rural America, like those of urban America, tended to accentuate personal rights of ownership and privileges of arbitrary enterprise.

But today, faced with numerous powers of destruction, American agriculture becomes more and more dependent not upon the ways and work of the individual, but upon the community of individuals. On many agrarian fronts the wilderness is rapidly returning, a wilderness not of untamed forests, abundant game, and roving Indians, but rather a wilderness of cruel desolation, a wilderness of soil and water in revolt against man.

During and after the great drought of 1936, which withered and blackened a million square miles of fields and ranges, the agrarian battle for survival shifted strongly to the Far West, where a frontier of communal open-range herding had been arbitrarily replaced by an intensely legal and highly individualistic régime of private farm ownership.

Reasonably typical of Far West dry lands is North Dakota, which is primarily a state built in the 'eighties and 'nineties from railroad promotion. Life and profit of frontier railroading were heavily dependent upon disposition of federal bounty lands granted to railroad promoters. Much of the land was verdant enough to support open-range herds, occasional communities of cattle and sheep operators, as well as several tribes of livestock-raising Indians. Therefore, the railroads began advertising and selling bounty lands as a new farm frontier of unexcelled promise. They instituted "sucker" trains equipped with brass bands, free meals and cheap excursion rates. "Prospects" became buyers. New buyers of dry farms, principally Midwesterners, immediately set out to impose the same individualistic, grab-all-quick style of farming then at flower in the Midwest. Therefore, they destroyed solvent grass to make way for insolvent grain, raised state and county governments in absolute imitation of similar units in the Midwest. In general these structures took no account of varying needs of individual communities. The Founding Fathers of this nation were wholly unacquainted with problems and administration of semi-deserts, which today comprise almost a third of the land area of the United States.

Decline of community structure in American dry lands apparently shows a causal relationship with recent intervals of dry-land insolvency. During the past four years, North Dakota's total of receipts from the United States in the form of direct and emergency relief and loans extended by federal credit agencies amounts to about $361,000,000. And there is in Dakota, for the first time in a good many years, real promise of a renaissance of community.

At Bismarck, once capital of the Mandans, I talked with Fred Symons, who edits the newspaper, studies the Dakotas, serves as counsel to the Washington administration. Symons said:

"If we ever get off the dole, we've got to develop a sounder agriculture. Better grass and better livestock are the real hope. To attain them we've got to work as individual communities—got to give each community the best possible chance at solving its own particular riddle. This

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may mean a set-up of grazing communities with a common reserve of surface water; or it may mean a communal center of irrigated lands from which livestock operators can be assured of a dependable reservoir of feed."

In western Dakota I talked with an old-school sheep rancher named Bill Ewalt. His comment was:

"It ain't sense for men to claim they own grass. Out here it's grass that owns men. . . . Use of grass can't be an open grab for ever'body. Men have got to start together—to work in groups for a common good."

At a remote Dakota village two cowboys, climbing out of a Ford truck, seated themselves at the window-base of a corner drug store. The truck carried a trailer upon which was encased a horse, ornately saddled and painstakingly goggled. With apt profanity the cowboys talked of weather, dying ranges and ailing ranches. We indulged in meditation and beer. The speaking cowboy began to find hope in the latter third of the second stein:

"Some day more cattle will be back in Dakota. Rain or no rain, empty spaces sprout some amount of weeds and grass. What we'll need when grass comes back is bigger operatin' outfits, mergers of cattle ranches — outfits that can take care of ranges, feed and market herds without grazin' the life out of grass. . . . We've got to commence to think a little more about the crowd, a little less about ownin' such and however many acres. Either we've got to work together or else stay on the WPA till hell turns to ice."

Wandering through the Far West, I have talked with various county agricultural agents, cattle ranchers and surviving farmers who speak hopefully of the possibilities for rebirth of communities which may succeed where individuals have failed.

Upon this line of meditation I joined with Mr. William Allen White, on an extremely hot day, at Emporia, Kansas. Bill White peered at me through small frameless spectacles:

"In West Kansas—that's the wheat empire—two crops out of five at a good price, or three out of five at a poor price, leaves the farmer sitting pretty."

Dexterously, the narrator swatted a fly with the first bulldog edition. An incredibly small telegram boy spilled his bicycle at the front door.

"West Kansas was opened in the 'eighties. First line of pioneers tried spring wheat. There wasn't enough water to make the crop. They pretty much starved out. Survivors learned how to grow winter wheat. That started the Kansas wheat-land boom. Wheat's still the real citizen of the land. And Kansas wheat growers are born individualists. They'll take government money in one hand and spend it with the other hand—planting more wheat. You can resettle 'em. You can send the militia after 'em. They'll burrow up in sand piles, peep out of the dust, thumb their noses and plant more wheat. . . ."

We strolled out into the blistering sun to attend the Emporia county fair. There the county agricultural agent displayed baby beefs and talked of grass, individualism, the rebirth of rural Kansas, wheat-growing haven of individualism.

"Yessir, even Kansas needs the community as a basis of agricultural administration. That's a need common to most parts of the United States. From a standpoint of farm background and farm technique this isn't one nation. It's a whole flock of nations. There's hardly a Western state with a climate that's anyways near uniform from one boundary to the next. In fact, it's not easy to locate one county where weather and soils are uniform enough to accommodate any great number of cropping policies or programs. So as far as farm counsel and supervision is concerned, the rural community is the best working unit."

Then he pointed out, as many county agricultural agents in many parts of the nation will point out, that actual functioning of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and its successive plans of federal farm administration are serving to revive accent upon the rural community by using the community as basis unit of administration. This definitely encourages rural citizens to band together—for collection of federal money, if for no better economic or social reason.

In Wisconsin the rural community is of growing importance. In the beginning of Wisconsin's statehood the township was the pioneer community, and it has retained the usual community obligations as regards public schools, health service, and church.

After lumbering interests had ripped away the vast forests of north Wisconsin, there followed, particularly during the war-time crop boom, a tremendous promotion of cut-over lands. Land companies and speculators bought great tracks of stump lands, which they proceeded to sell as cheap farms. Tens of thousands of people bought these lands and attempted to farm them. Most of the ventures failed. Depression made the submarginal holdings all the more impossible.

Thus a great many of the backwoods communities met lingering and ungracious deaths. Mortality of failing communities began to threaten the lives of those communities which survived. Abandoned lands went tax delinquent. Townships and counties lost tremendously in revenue. Solvent communities were loaded down with obligations for providing institutions and services for the isolated families and insolvent communities which remained. This resulted in tremendous increases of community or township school and road costs. Health and medical services for the remote hangers-on became comparably expensive. Aban-

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doned homes became serious fire hazards and multiplied the costs of fire patrol.

Boundaries between farmable and unfarmable lands were and are comparatively easily definable. Therefore, rural zoning appeared as the one means of community survival. Consequently, the state legislature passed an enabling act authorizing the adventure in universal zoning. The county commission, or governing board, has one elected member from each township within the county. Each county commissioner is also chairman of his township committee, which has two other elected members. State law gives the county board "authority to regulate, restrict and determine the areas within which agriculture, forestry and recreation may be conducted."

Since the destiny of any zoning ordinance is foundationed by supporting public opinion, Wisconsin recommends that every motion to zone be inaugurated by means of a community "educational" campaign. Discussion meetings are held in school houses, halls or private homes. These allow landowners and residents of a community due opportunity to learn the purpose of the proposed zoning and to offer discussion as to what extent it may affect the community as a whole. A basic land survey of the entire county is made by the state university's college of agriculture. If the township vote is affirmative, the case is next presented at an official public hearing held at the county courthouse. Next the county zoning committee writes out the proposed ordinances, and draws up a map of all areas listed as best suited to farming, forestry or recreation centers. Tentative ordinances and maps are then submitted to the state's attorney general's office for review. This done, proposals are returned to township committees which approve, reject or enter whatever changes they believe in the best interest of their community. Maps and ordinances are then returned to the county clerk. Legal enactment is made by the county board. When adopted, neither deed nor title may be given for farms within an area listed as non-agricultural. Prior holders of such property cannot be deprived of their land. But the community is reasonably well protected from unsound expansion and from recurrence of non-productive obligations.

To date, about 250 Wisconsin townships, representing at least as many rural communities, have inaugurated such zoning. Thus far judiciary opinion has been reasonably friendly to the cause. The venture in civic conservation is definitely accenting interest in community. It is apparently helping the rural community to survive—as a government unit, as well as an economic and social institution. It is our best contemporary instance of legislation which would enable the community to gain strength and security while indulging in a strategy of self-defense and self-conservation.

Of the rather widespread renaissance of what might be called "spiritual" communities in rural America, I can cite no better instance than the rural New England township, say, of Vermont.

New England in general, and its "backwoods" as embodied in such a state as Vermont in particular, remains an arena of comparatively intense individualism. In daily conduct of work and business, in buying, selling, taxing and borrowing, the usual Vermont farmer or storekeeper is perhaps as complete an individualist as one can expect to find anywhere in America. But his agrarian individualism is largely an interpretation of geographic environment. Where boulders are many, good soil scarce, and homesteads more vertical than horizontal, he relies upon rugged, though adroit, individualism to succeed where loose-jointed collectivism would obviously stand to fail.

But the Vermont constitution, virtually identical with the draft formulated in 1777 when Vermont was an independent republic, remains one of the most liberal constitutional documents extant, and generations ahead of the much amended constitution of the United States. Basically it recognizes state obligation to the township, plus the direct validity of township obligation to the individual.

Even in individualistic Vermont the township becomes the community in civic interest. The annual town meeting is actually an open forum of community; its purpose one of democratic and common administration for private property, and direct and common acceptance of community obligations, such as poor relief, medical services, and local road maintenance and repair. There remain such picturesque (and unsalaried) officials as the township fire warden, whose duties involve prevention and combat of fires, not for protection of private property, as in the case of the usual local fire department, but rather for common protection of the community's or township's welfare. Similarly, the township fence-viewer's duty is not one of telling John Jones how to survey and build a fence for Jones's private benefit. It is merely that of identifying whether John Jones's fence is in good enough repair so that the Jones's livestock may not destroy property for which the township is collectively responsible. Similarly, the township tree warden is no source of timber information or administration. He is merely a sort of semi-magistrate who decides when a given tree, regardless of its ownership and property status, becomes a menace or barrier to road, stream, fence or other common. Thus the old-fashioned New England township, though part of a civilization of entrenched individualism, remains a prime stabilizer for community and a curb to many of the more destructive phases of individualism.

From such a seedbed of American civic philosophy, there is good reason to believe that the rural community may anticipate continued life.

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Practise of American government and politics has long tended to overlook and neglect the rural community, to shift administrative emphasis to the county, the congressional or judiciary district and the state. Now federal administrative practises are taking better account of the single community. The Works Progress Administration has become noticeably "community minded." So, in practise, have the Soil Conservation Administration and numerous federal lending agencies. The prevalent government policy of allowing small groups of farmers to "thresh out at home" the texts of their requests or contracts is doing a great deal to refocus rural attention upon community.

Then, too, stranded populations are now become a challenge. In years gone by, when a source of revenue or enterprise was locally exhausted, the population moved to another place. But now our frontiers have faded and there are few, if any, places to which stranded populations can move—with any assurance that fortunes will be bettered. This dilemma, which is real and impressive in many parts of America today, lends still another motive and impetus for revival of the community as a defense from abject dependence upon public charities. As communities, stranded populations can sometimes attract new industries and crops—particularly at this time when so many new industries, crops and services are coming upon the commercial horizon.

Economically, communities fail for much the same reason that individuals fail. The body ceases to produce and in due course it exhausts capital reserve. But today the community has two comparatively new preventives with which to combat this lingering threat of economic death.

The first, still nebulous to be sure, is the cooperative system by means of which the community's flow-off of capital can sometimes be checked. The producer's cooperative, and to a lesser extent, the consumer's cooperative, are becoming well-established resources in many great sections of rural America. On the whole, orderly functioning of the farmer's cooperative helps toward endowing the rural community with renewed interest and importance.

More promising of community sturdiness is the probable continuation of a nation-wide works program under which idle labor and equipment in a stranded area may be put to use for the good of the nation at large—with costs payable by the nation at large. In this way the unproductive community, by the very fact of retaining its consuming power, might reasonably be added to the productive capacity of other communities which are more prosperous.

But it is my belief that the whitest hope for revival and restored solvency of the American community lies in the fact that the community is traditional and long-proven as an American way.

Move on, You!

By TIM O'BRIEN

MOST views on unemployment omit the tremendous and increasing non-settled population known as transient or migratory workers. There is no union to give out the figures on them. No census catches all of them. But throughout the country, every night, homeless workers are sleeping in jails, jungles, boxcars, subways, barns, railroad sandhouses, brick kilns, sawdust piles, cotton gins, hallways, missions, Salvation Army hotels and flophouses and some travel all night. The jails in two adjacent New Jersey and Pennsylvania cities each house from sixty to seventy wanderers nightly. In an eastern seaboard city five large police stations regularly give over large areas of cement floor space to let men sleep on newspapers. Some never sleep in a bed for months. It would be silly to arrest them for vagrancy—the courts could not handle them nor the workhouses hold them.

That the condition is general throughout the country is borne out by the reports of men checking in from Boston, Detroit, New Orleans, St. Louis and further west, and is recognized by police chiefs and agencies accessible to these people. In August, 1937, according to the American Association of Railroads, 407,000 persons were taken off trains for illegal riding, and it is known that some railroads permit free riding to accommodate industries needing seasonal labor. It seems entirely reasonable to estimate the roving population at 2,000,000.

We have seen how they are sheltered. The food to keep them going is equally uncertain and inadequate. Breadlines, "mission" soup, backdoor handouts from charitable householders, hospitals, convents and rectory kitchens alternate and supplement jungle fare. The jungle, of course, is the camp near the freight yards handy to arriving and departing freight trains, and in these men cook food, shave and wash clothes.

Clothing is an ever-present problem, winter and summer, important also because the fear and distrust with which the wandering unemployed man is treated is usually in proportion to his shabbiness. The health of these people is bad, as might be known from the exposure, hardships

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and irregularity which is their lot. Many are afflicted with tuberculosis and venereal diseases, with scarce a chance of recovery in their way of living, a menace to themselves and the country at large. Needless to say, the bed linen in jails and flophouses cannot be fresh each night for new occupants. Clinics are usually closed to them and, if afflicted, they must watch their condition grow worse without treatment.

The homeless worker has no place to store or leave anything. His few belongings as well as his person are subject to all weather and whatever treatment people choose to give him, and that includes intimidation by some police, arbitrary arrest, chain gangs, penal farms, vagrancy laws. The settled unemployed with roots in a community have recourse to friends, to the relief rolls or the WPA. Their right to live is more clearly recognized and they have a voice and a vote in their communities. The transient has neither and the residence laws are generally calculated to keep him from regaining them. The order for him to "move on" is his greeting unless some can exploit his labor for a time.

The fact most often lost sight of or never recognized in considering the migratory worker is that, were justice done, he is not a charge upon society claiming what is not his due. The great commercial and industrial expansion of the United States could not have taken place without him, and today there are many big industries which could not function without the seasonal labor the transient performs. The tracks of the great railroads uniting East and West were laid by him. His labor went into the bridges and the rapidly rising cities, as well as mines and oil fields.

There are skilled and unskilled among the "boomers," the first class including construction men for dams and highways, printers, structural iron workers, musicians, entertainers, painters, sign painters, carpenters, tree toppers, blacksmiths, etc., while among the less skilled are seamen, section hands and, of course, the unskilled. There are, of course, on the road those chronically weak in character who are unable to meet the responsibility of any station in life, but there are these likewise among the settled, rich and poor, and to brand all transients as conventional hoboes is a libel and an injustice.

In addition to large-scale farming, or the production of grain, vegetables and fruits, other industries dependent on the transient are lumbering, summer and winter resorts, and the entertainment field. The worker is employed for a limited period and must save enough, if he can, of his meager earnings to travel on to some other clime and provide for his need for an indefinite period.

Up until a short time after the World War the boomer could usually find work, if not at his own trade, then at some other. During the period of mechanical expansion of the Western farms thousands of men roamed the country, following and gathering the great wheat harvests. With the economic crisis came the collapse of industrialized agriculture, entailing great losses not only to the farmer and the public but also to the third party, the migratory worker. Mill and factory owners moved their plants from place to place in pursuit of tax exemption and cheaper labor, thus adding to the ranks of transient labor their former hands, obliged to leave home to follow their livelihood.

The outlook for the boomer in a country without a boom is indeed a gloomy one, and his number is increasing through recruitment from the settled jobless whose savings have been exhausted, from youth who cannot tolerate being a continued burden to their families and who join the wanderers in following rumors of jobs. The college-trained and technicians are now found among the transients in numbers unheard of before.

Families uprooted by drought, depression or flood, drag their children, deprived of schooling, about the country with them. They travel in rattle-trap cars, the relic of old prosperity or the desperate investment of the last fifty dollars that could be wheedled from relatives pulled taut in finance and patience. These migratory families, hoping to benefit their children with a settled home, fill up the ranks of beaten share-croppers in the South. The labor done by migratory families in agriculture, canneries and other lines open to them is always hard. This work is usually done in hot weather for long hours and at peon wages, with children taking full part in the back-breaking tasks. The pitifully low wages they receive are well set forth in the N.C.W.C. pamphlet by Father Schmiedeler, "Our Rural Proletariat."

This impoverished army is a constant threat to wages and decent labor standards. The unscrupulous can find numerous homeless unemployed for any work at shamefully low pay.

The settlement laws, various and vicious, aggravate the problem. In some states the law requires two years to qualify for residence. In some restricted areas, the rich entrench themselves behind a four-year requirement and in others the laws have been revised in the direction of "efficiency and economy" to prevent settlement without funds. One settlement law denies residence to people who have been away from their home state for a year regardless of the fact that these persons may have been good citizens for twenty years before absenting themselves, and left only in pursuit of work and to avoid going on relief. Some states guard their boundaries when seasonal labor is not required, shunting the proletarian travelers away in box-cars until the proper time for their exploitation.

The Negro on the road is subject to all the hazards and hardships of the white transient plus

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some more on account of his color. People of his own race are seldom in a position to help him, and to the whites of whom he must solicit aid he is an object of special distrust and suspicion. He is given harsher treatment by railroad detectives when caught trespassing or riding trains, and ride trains he must because of his extra difficulty in securing rides on the highways. He rarely misses the chain gang in the states having them. When he must steal, justifiably because of his hunger, he is regarded as a criminal, and if a crime is committed in his vicinity his guilt is assumed. On the bedrock of need, however, in the jungle along the railroad tracks, there sometimes occurs the recognition of a common humanity in the sharing of food and a fire. This is happening also among those semi-transients, the tenant farmers of the Southwest who have organized, Negro and white side by side, too often solely under leftist leadership.

There was a program of federal aid in varying degrees of operations and effectiveness from 1933 to late 1935 which temporarily counteracted some of the buck-passing by the states by grants in aid to forty-seven states (Vermont abstaining). With these funds, work and rehabilitation camps were set up. But the pressure for reduction in relief spending became insistent late in 1934 and in 1935, and the federal authorities withdrew from direct relief. The first blow of retrenchment fell upon the transient care, the most newly developed form of public relief. WPA, then established, took care only of the state's citizens, and the camp transient, excluded from this citizenship by the phrase in most settlement laws requiring, for residence, a certain period of time *without public relief,* was literally left out in the cold. The Committee on Care of Transients and Homeless, with headquarters in New York City, has steadily brought this condition to the attention of governmental units, has won recognition of the problem and inspired numerous studies looking toward a solution. The committee stands for a national program and the sharing of responsibility among the states and the federal government. Recently this problem is reported to be receiving some consideration by the Social Security Board.

The WPA authorized, as a national policy, the acceptance of non-settled persons on jobs, provided local authorities would enroll them. Local needs are so great that jobs are given only to those on local relief rolls which, of course, are not open to transients. The CCC was opened to wandering young men who could designate an acceptable allottee. These measures, though of some value, are limited by the tendency to give preference to the home town residents, whose claims are considered prior by local officials.

What we have then, in this country whose declaration of political independence recognizes the God-given rights of man, is an expanding class deprived not only of the rights of citizenship, but even the right to live as human beings. The meaning of American citizenship to them might be summed up as the right to pay indirect taxes (without representation) and to bear arms in time of war. For though the legislators may, we can be sure the Draft Board will not, forget them.

They are expected to observe laws whose protection is not extended to them, to respect institutions in whose benefits they may not share. Their circumstances and their shabbiness by their own and public opinion, bar them from participation in most forms of social life, even from church, though the poorly clad homeless in New York can worship at ease in the Holy Name Mission on the Bowery, where there is a regular attendance of 1,500 at six Masses. In the country with the "highest standard of living" they are constantly malnourished, ill-sheltered, without medical care.

And our present economic system, industrialized both as to manufacturing and agriculture, needs these people, demands that there be a mobile population to tend and harvest, pack and can the fruits which help make our balanced diets, to gather in the grains that Wall Street gambles on. Yet the employers and growers' associations whose products would never exist or reach markets without their labor have fought their attempt to better their lot through organization, have had them shipped like cattle away from state lines, and have been indifferent or hostile to attempts to provide for them through state aid.

Even granting the present industrial set-up, there are measures for immediate improvement which should be promoted by everyone with social conscience or an intelligent concern for the economic welfare of the country. The first of these is uniformity of state settlement laws, which would obviate the ruthless and futile shuttling and shunting of the needy and open the way for reciprocal aid by the states. The federal government could reimburse the states for care of transients who claim no legal settlement, and there are many who fit into this class.

The provision by the federal government of employment bureaus coordinating current information on the need for workers in various sections of the country would eliminate much fruitless traveling and conserve the workers' time, strength and meager funds, and at the same time serve the producers and farmers.

Many of the evils of transiency which have been referred to here and many others which could be treated, can be alleviated or banished by a recognition of the problem and public support of the proper measures. The fostering of a class of citizens without the rights, advantages and responsibilities of citizens is un-Christian, unwise, and, if you care, un-American.

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Communism and the Federal Theatre

By EMMET LAVERY

FOR THREE years we have had in this country a federal theatre which, as one of the arms of the WPA relief projects, has presented approximately 900 different plays for an audience of about 25,000,000 people. Limited by statute to a relief roll personnel, with a very small variation for non-relief supervisory positions, it has nevertheless four major achievements to its credit:

(1) Decentralization of the theatre: thirty-three projects now operating in twenty-two states demonstrate the commercial soundness of expanding the market for actors and playwrights instead of confining it to Broadway.

(2) A fair price of admission: the attendance figures throughout the country indicate that when a dollar top prevails, there is little question of the theatre dying.

(3) The Living Newspaper technique: the most original contribution to the modern theatre, exciting variations of which are already apparent in Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" and in George Kaufman's forthcoming "The Fabulous Invalid," as well as in Maxwell Anderson's musical comedy, "Knickerbocker Holiday."

(4) Professional rehabilitation: about 2,000 persons, or approximately 20 percent of the average total number of employees, has been returned to private industry.

These of course are the more objective accomplishments of federal theatre and do not include such subjective triumphs as the production of "Faustus," "Macbeth," "Murder in the Cathedral," "Prologue to Glory," "Haiti," "One Third of a Nation" or the classical repertory at Roslyn, Long Island, under Charles Hopkins which gave us such a brilliant "Coriolanus." Neither do they cover the field of children's theatre, the Negro theatre, the dance theatres, the free caravans in the parks, the religious cycles at Christmas or the great regional festivals in preparation this year in Chicago, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Boston and Miami. Yet from these few lines you may glean some quick yet authoritative picture of federal theatre at the moment.

How then to account for the delusion which still persists in many minds that federal theatre is altogether a subversive enterprise, controlled by revolutionary communists? That for three years it has been simply a propaganda vehicle for the uprooting of American democratic traditions? And that all its plays and all its personnel reflect a distinct hostility to the Church and all that it stands for in this country?

Well, it is easy enough to understand how this Red myth began. We have a wide variety of economic beliefs in this country and the statute which set up the WPA white collar projects didn't draw lines on any political or philosophic basis. If a man could qualify as to need and professional competence, he got a job and nobody stopped to ask him whether he followed the gospel according to Marx or Thomas Aquinas. But why in the light of the actual record of plays produced should this Red mirage persist? I think it is because most of the viewers-with-alarm have not seen most of the plays or have not read most of the plays.

Indeed I know of only two independent efforts that have ever been made by Catholics to evaluate the whole federal theatre from an objective basis. One was by a Jesuit up in Weston College who asked me to send him for study some of the plays supposed to be communist, "because the Catholic papers never mention the plays when they make the allegation." And the other was by a candidate for a doctorate at Catholic University who made an exhaustive study of various new plays recommended by federal theatre and who decided that no definite trends were apparent on the basis of plays recommended.

Let it be understood at once that there is nothing secret about the operations of federal theatre. Its activities over a period of three years have been covered with commendable fidelity by the American press. As soon as the Dies Committee convened in Washington, Mrs. Flanagan and the regional directors volunteered to appear en masse. They were not called, but for nearly a month the committee received and released all kinds of hearsay testimony, without either calling the executives of federal theatre or giving them the opportunity to cross-examine.

Consider also two statements of Congressman J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey, a member of the Dies Committee, who has been conducting various inquiries into all kinds of isms. Early in August he was quoted in the New York *Times* as saying that "practically every single play presented under the auspices of the Theatre Project is sheer propaganda for Communism or the New Deal." And on September 1 he was quoted by the New York *Herald Tribune* as saying that "practically every single Federal play presented under her [Mrs. Flanagan's] administration has been pure, unadulterated radical propaganda."

These statements interested me particularly because since last October it has been part of my job as director of program in federal theatre

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to clear most of the plays produced. I have probably passed on about 300 productions and so I immediately asked for an opportunity to testify. To date I have not even received an acknowledgment of my letter.

What does this all add up to? And whom are you to believe? Directors of a theatre ready and eager to testify at all times and all places? Or a congressman who thinks there is something communistic in federal theatre's current three hits, "Prologue to Glory," "Haiti" and "One Third of a Nation"?

True, there are some Catholics who seem to see eye to eye with Congressman Thomas despite his bizarre opinions as a drama critic. I am ready to concede that there may be perfectly valid evidence of individual discrimination here and there. I do not believe for one moment, as some affirm, that 40 percent of the total federal theatre payroll is communist. I agree that it is quite possible for a communist supervisor to be guilty of the same kind of discrimination that might be experienced at the hands of a Republican or Democratic executive. And I submit that any such abuse of authority should be promptly and summarily punished, but I vigorously deny that some 9,000 employees of federal theatre should be held responsible for the isolated, sporadic activities of a small handful of troublemakers.

Oddly enough it happens that George Kondolf, the director of the New York City project, the biggest unit in the country and the center of most of the controversy at present, is a Catholic. But the true picture of federal theatre is not to be obtained by the balancing of so many Catholics against so many communists. It is to be obtained solely through a study of the plays produced and the research published—because basically we had little or no choice as to the personnel but we did have a choice as to the plays and the research. On that issue federal theatre should rise or fall.

The simple fact is that federal theatre is a people's theatre and as such it represents no one group and no one class, either artistically, economically or politically. And within it there are as many shades of theatre thought as there are variations among congressmen.

What then *were* the plays produced? Well, the list is too long to print here but you can obtain a copy by writing to the National Service Bureau of Federal Theatre at 1697 Broadway. From it you will find, and perhaps to your surprise, that less than 10 percent of all the plays produced dealt with economic or social problems; that about five-sixths of all plays produced were by American authors; that approximately 10 percent of the productions were new plays, most of them by American authors; and that an encouraging emphasis is readily apparent with respect to the classics and regional American drama.

Some idea of the amazing diversity of the material presented can be had by one glance at some of the following tabulations:

Broadway successes	287
Minor stock plays	190
New plays	116
Foreign plays	76
Children's plays	53
Classical plays	41
Yiddish plays	17
Revues and musicals	35
Early American plays	15
Living Newspapers	7
Marionette (major)	9
Dance dramas	12
American pageants	3
Vaudeville (major)	9
Religious plays	10
Negro plays	27

The above figures are not a complete breakdown for there are many other groupings and classifications which can be made but they do demonstrate very quickly that the great bulk of the plays falls into three classes: Broadway successes, minor stock and new plays. As time goes on of course it is to be hoped that the three largest groupings will be new plays, classical drama and regional drama but the almost too conventional aspect of much of the program so far should lay forever that "un-American" specter which has been haunting the Dies Committee.

Further examination of the records will reveal very clearly that the great body of plays is being tarred with the minority brush just as is the great body of employees. And strangely enough several of these "subversive" dramas are not communist at all, unless you consider that any comment on the social scene is necessarily communist. Thus, the Living Newspaper, "Power," may often be embarrassing to some people in the candor of its comment on the corporate structure of public utilities, but have we reached the point where we regard all such criticism as ipso facto communist? Personally, I should like to see the percentage of social dramas increase next season, if only by way of assurance that federal theatre will not retreat from so important a field merely because a few plays may have leaned a little to the left or a few critics may have leaned a little to the right!

The whole situation reminds me of Ben Jonson's remark about a stranger in a tavern—the one to the effect that he didn't like a certain man because he didn't know him. That is especially the case with Mrs. Flanagan, the national director of federal theatre. For many people she will always be a sinister figure for no other reason than the fact that they have not yet met her. They consider her doubly sinister because she went to Russia, though she also studied the theatre, as a Guggenheim fellow, in Greece, England, France,

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Germany, Norway, Sweden and Czechoslovakia. Any study of all she has written or said about the federal theatre would reveal: that we could not build federal theatre on any European model but must create it on democratic principles.

A young Catholic pamphleteer wrote to me recently: "I am deeply shocked to see you associating with such abominable Marxists as Hallie Flanagan and her associates in the federal theatre. . . . These people are evil and no good can come from them. . . . Is it because the baby needs new shoes that you work with them? . . . Or do you go on the old Protestant theory of seeing a little bit of good in everyone?"

I could only assure this isolationist that association with the federal theatre involved no compromise with conscience and that a personally conducted tour might demonstrate the point to his satisfaction. But I haven't heard from him either. Apparently he would rather stay away and criticize than come and see.

The simple fact is that I went into federal theatre because I believed in the future of a great national theatre in this country and I was convinced that a playwright without such a theatre was like a fish out of water.

It has of course, like any vast organization, its limitations and its absurdities. Remember that at bottom it is a relief organization and that most of its problems consequently are those which are peculiar to a relief organization rather than a theatre organization. You may not agree with the philosophy of relief which created it and you may care even less for the national theatre which might some day evolve out of all this labor. But we should have some reasoned and realistic attitude toward the fact of its present existence.

In its survey of Catholic drama from the thirteenth to the twentieth century, the first inventory of its kind ever undertaken, the federal theatre has already laid the groundwork for the Catholic theatre of tomorrow in this country just as it has paved the way for the Negro and the Jewish theatres of tomorrow with similar research. Shall we spurn such valuable service or shall we develop it and extend it?

The following story should reveal why many people believe in the necessity for a national theatre.

Down in Florida a traveling repertory company has been carrying the classics to children who have never seen the living theatre before. And when the federal theatre players return to a town, they are met with greetings like these:

"Hello, Olivia!" "Hello, Malvolio!" "Hello, Sir Toby Belch!"

Now maybe some congressmen would think this subversive but to me it looks as if the theatre is being born again.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

WHETHER or not there is to be another great war in Europe, bound to spread and to unite itself to the smaller wars already raging in Spain and in China, and causing still other outbreaks of revolutions and local quarrels in countries not as yet involved, is a terrible question pressing upon us now, and which we must continue to face even if there is no immediate clash in, or because of, Czechoslovakia. But the truth of the matter is that we already are at war in our world, everywhere. We may or we may not escape from, or postpone, the extension of actual physical fighting, but unless we can deal with the fundamental problems which underlie all the disturbances, we cannot escape from the social conflicts—the class wars, and the conflicts of opposing ideologies, and of clashing interests. There is war in the hearts and minds and souls of mankind universally; not only war between nations and peoples, as in the Orient, or civil war, as in Spain, but social and mental war in all countries, and all nations. It is under the surface as yet, generally speaking, like a fire still underground, creeping among roots and debris in a forest, but breaking through that surface in many places, and threatening to become a vast conflagration. The winds of anger, the hurricanes of hatred, that would spring up among the peoples of Europe if the guns are unmuzzled, and the poison gas begins to flow, and the bombing planes are unleashed, are already gathering among the clouds of censorship, and ignorance of what is being done, behind the closing frontiers, and in the secret councils of the diplomats and soldiers.

We in America are not immune from the disease of disorder so evident elsewhere; far from it, indeed, for our social and political and economic and religious conditions display the most serious symptoms of our interior sickness. We are as yet only in the preliminary stage of the evil conditions which are so virulent elsewhere. But unless we correct our own troubles at their source, they are bound to grow, and to combine, to bring about a complete breakdown of our national life. And I for one believe that we Americans cannot possibly correct our own troubles by ourselves, without reference to the troubles of other people. We are not only Americans; we are human beings. Any form of nationalism which results in the people of a particular nation, or race, holding themselves separate and aloof from the peoples of other nations and races, in spiritual and moral aloofness, is wrong.

I do not for one moment mean that we Americans should go to war if war—the physical, actual, material war—should come. I for one in this time of decision hold, as I think the vast majority of Americans hold, that unless or until this country is literally attacked, truly threatened by invasion, we should refrain from taking part in any form of warfare. But certainly we should take our full share of the work and the sacrifices which are necessary to the undertaking of the one and only course by which

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general warfare and consequent revolution may be avoided —and that course is a work of general, international justice. And that means justice not only for ourselves, and for our friends, and for those nations and peoples with whom we are sympathetic—even more importantly, it must mean justice for our rivals, our enemies, if we have such, and for those nations and peoples who follow systems of government, and ways of living, which we detest or fear. It means that the injustices which are largely responsible for the appearance in the world of such abnormal and dreadful systems as Communism, and Fascism, and Nazism, must not only be recognized, but also alleviated, at the least, and rectified if possible.

We who consider ourselves enlightened and enriched beyond other peoples, cannot, if we are to be true to our own principles, behave as the Communists or Nazis behave—or as we think they do—in a spirit of exclusiveness —by refusing to acknowledge any truth or anything desirable or commendable in the systems adopted by other nations. Great Britain and France and the United States, and such countries as Holland and Belgium, which possess or control vast regions of the earth, regions productive of great and unceasing streams of wealth—so much of which are the fruits of armed conquest and forcible exploitation—need to pay heed to the claims advanced by such nations as Germany, Italy and Japan. Detestable as are the systems of government and philosophies of life followed by those countries, nevertheless it remains true that they suffer from many ills which could be remedied by the richer and more powerful democracies. There could be, and there ought to be, a general appeasement of territorial, minority and economic grievances—and the greater and wealthier nations should take the lead, and show an example, in doing so.

Unless no rule but that of force is to be acknowledged, we must accept the Golden Rule literally, and promptly, and universally. A pious platitude? Yes—when it is preached but not practised—but it is the most practical of all policies if and when it is really practised. Anyhow, no other policy is open to mankind now as an alternative to that of brute and naked force—permanent warfare, the end of which can only be anarchy and general revolution, and the relapse of mankind into savagery worse than that of primitive races, because it would be the savagery of madness, of degeneracy. Christians, in all the nations, must subordinate all other things to the task of arousing mankind to the nature of the problem they face—but, first of all, Christians must themselves realize and act upon the principles of their religion.

Communications

ARE WE FAIR TO THE CHURCH?

Auburn, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Congratulations for the two splendid and much-needed articles, "Are We Fair to the Church?" which give some of the reasons for the linking of the Church and fascism (September 9 and 16 issues of THE COMMONWEAL). But the main reasons for the mistake of linking the Church with fascism will never be presented until Catholic workingmen are permitted to write in the Catholic press and diocesan papers, their criticism of the actions and lack of action of the majority of the clergy on social questions.

The Catholic press will print criticism from non-Catholics because it can evade giving a satisfactory answer by dismissing it with a charge of bigotry and a "what else could you expect from a non-Catholic" attitude. And should a Catholic write an article in a non-Catholic publication, and raise some embarrassing questions regarding the attitude of some of the clergy on social questions, he is condemned for using a non-Catholic publication.

Yet, when a Catholic workingman writes to his diocesan paper, as I have done, urging it to give more than one Catholic viewpoint on the many controversial social questions, it refuses to even acknowledge receipt of the letters. The Catholic press smothers the opinions of Catholic workingmen by ignoring them, and in so doing, it sabotages the Catholic principles of peace and the encyclicals.

Why does not some Catholic publication urge Catholic workingmen, representing the "poorest one-third" of our population, to set forth their views in print?

The Church is not fascist, but these workingmen could tell us what some members of the clergy say and do as well as what they neglect to say and do, which creates the false impression that the Church is fascist. Until this is done, we are not fair to the Church, nor to its children.

WALTER O'HAGAN.

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: Please accept my sincere congratulations upon the publication of Bishop Lucey's articles. To me they are among the finest things which have appeared in THE COMMONWEAL.

W. T. PURDUM.

CLINTON PRISON

Dannemora, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Have you ever visited Clinton Prison? It is secluded in the foothills of the Adirondacks and has long been known as the "Siberia of America." Its walls confine more than 2,000 unfortunates, from sixteen to seventy-three years of age. Adjoining it is the State Hospital, which bars 1,022 criminal insane—men who have become mentally afflicted since coming to prison. Of this total of more than 3,000 men and boys, 1,848 are former residents of this state, the remaining number are transients who happened into the state from scattered sections of the country and where they eventually became enmeshed with the law.

Surely, confinement and rigid discipline cannot correct all the subnormal and abnormal ideas and tendencies of these offenders. It is a task that rests almost entirely upon the prison chaplain and the spiritual department of which he has charge. The tremendous task of spiritual readjustment must be accomplished by a tense religious schedule of normal church service and all its auxiliaries. Social service is administered to everyone, there being no

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distinction made because of color or creed. Hundreds of letters are written; employment is sought for those about to be paroled; reading material is solicited from friends and publishers to feed idle minds and thus prevent, in so far as possible, the opportunity for worry and morbid thought—indulgences which in every walk of life exact a heavy toll in mental and physical deterioration.

The problem with which we are at present concerned is that of providing these inmates with a spiritual center—a church, very simple in construction, that will be for them a "bit of heaven within the walls," and a sanctuary for their sorrowed hearts. This proposed church will be dedicated to Saint Dismas, the Good Thief, whose belated but sincere repentance at Calvary brought him heavenly reward.

You can aid in bringing many repentant souls back to God by sending us a contribution toward this church construction fund. You can save minds and hearts with your generosity and help us to return these lads into the world as reconstructed, rehabilitated citizens. It is interesting to note that His Eminence, Cardinal Hayes, performed his last act as Cardinal of Charities, before his departure for his summer home, by giving us a contribution of $5,000. The project has been endorsed by all the high officials of the State and Church.

Rev. A. R. Hyland,
Catholic Chaplain, Clinton Prison,
Dannemora, New York.

THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

New York, N. Y.

To the Editors: With loud-shrieking hysteria on one side, soft-spoken hypocrisy on the other, it is a relief to turn to the moderation which marks The Commonweal's discussion of the international crisis.

To war or not to war—that is the question. And I wonder if a more terrible dilemma ever faced Christendom. If war would end the evils against which it is waged—but there's the rub. War affords no such promise. Instead it threatens to increase these evils many fold.

If we enter this war, we enter it with none of the delusions that lured us into first: war to end war; war to save democracy. No, we go to it like sheep to the slaughter. What a hopeless outlook!

If truth is the first casualty in every war, in the next we kill the only truth that has salvation in it—the truth that all nations are responsible for the present terrifying predicament. There are sins of omission as well as of commission, and what government can plead innocent of one or the other? In the sight of God, there is none guiltless and is not the only distinction He makes between those who confess and those who conceal their transgressions?

Could His Church do more or better at this eleventh hour than to call upon the nations to acknowledge the wrongs they have done, trusting that a spirit of humility will supplant that of pride, and so save them all from the path of destruction in which the spirit of self-righteousness has led them—all?

Frank D. Slocum.

Points & Lines

Mobilization for Relief

SIX DAYS after the hurricane struck their states, the New England governors said it appeared that several hundred millions of dollars would be needed for rehabilitation. As for the dead, the list was still growing, it might reach 700 in New England. The marshaling of safety, relief and rehabilitation forces in the storm area took on an impressiveness matching the dimensions of the disaster. The work of private individuals and private companies could rarely receive particular attention, and likewise the work of regular public forces such as the police and firemen. The Baltimore *Sun* summarizes:

> Private and governmental agencies struggled against almost insurmountable odds to bring order into the ravaged areas. Telephone, telegraph and railroad workers were put on 24-hour duty; militiamen were mobilized; and off-shift police were hurriedly recalled to duty.

The *Post-Dispatch* notes from St. Louis:

> Many agencies in the storm area were mobilized for relief work—National Guard, army, Coast Guard and State Health departments, police, firemen, American Legion men and Boy Scouts to direct traffic.

The Red Cross was quick to swing into action, Vice Chairman James L. Fieser announced from Providence:

> The Red Cross, through its New England chapters, will assume responsibility for relief of all families unable to provide their own means of recovery. The Red Cross has assumed entire responsibility for this work, leaving federal and state agencies free to concentrate on plans for highway, bridge and general state and municipal rehabilitation. . . . In addition to aiding sufferers from the storm, the Red Cross also will repair or rebuild homes for thousands of men and women.

Harry L. Hopkins, WPA administrator, went to New England as President Roosevelt's personal representative, and WPA reversed its relief rôle and became the government agency giving greatest relief to others. After attending a governors' conference, Mr. Hopkins said over the radio, as reported by the New York *Times:*

> . . . an army of 100,000 WPA workers had been mobilized in the stricken area. . . . More WPA workers will be hired and there will be no delays during the emergency on the question of whether they have been certified by local authorities.

The federal work, according to the *Times,*

> . . . directed principally from the headquarters of the army's First Corps Area at Boston, was under the direct supervision of Brigadier General George Tyner, who was sent from Washington to take charge of that particular task. . . . General Tyner was using, in addition to army stores, CCC boys from approximately sixty camps, with a personnel totaling about 11,000.

The Navy, too, entered the work:

> The Navy Department sent special orders to commandments of the first and third naval districts embracing the New England storm area to lend all possible aid to the emergency and to concentrate on maintaining communications and rescuing injured or marooned persons.

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The Coast Guard was the first agency after the Weather Bureau implicated. The *Christian Science Monitor* reported:

> An army of 2,500 coast guardsmen and scores of Red Cross workers led dramatic rescue and relief operations along the storm-swept northeast coast.

The Public Works Administration joined other agencies "to map a long-range program to restore areas swept by Wednesday's hurricane."

The Reconstruction Finance Corporation came up with a subsidiary not much publicized before. Chairman Jones telegraphed:

> The Disaster Loan Corporation is an RFC agency especially authorized to make loans for the rehabilitation of property damaged by such catastrophes, and we are ready to give prompt consideration to such loans in the areas affected when rehabilitation is begun and our services needed.

The Baltimore *Sun* reported on September 24:

> The National Youth Administration said that virtually its entire enrolment in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, numbering upward of 2,300 young men and women, was engaged in salvage tasks.
>
> The Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation dispatched two carloads of evaporated milk to New Haven and Providence, and also sent a carload of flour and two cars of butter to the hard-hit communities.
>
> The Federal Power Commission sent its chief engineer, Roger B. McWhorter, to make a personal inspection of the affected districts and to recommend measures for restoring power facilities and service.

The *Times* reported:

> The Federal Communications Commission announced it would extend special operating licenses wherever necessary to radio stations, to enable them to expand communication facilities, and reminded all stations in the area that restrictions were automatically waived for the handling of messages involving the safety of life and property, when normal communications were disrupted.

The Federal Housing Administration formed repair and rebuilding projects. The *Times* reported:

> Making use for the first time in this region of a special clause in the National Housing Act giving the FHA administrator the right to expedite insurance on "disaster loans," the federal agency in Washington sent to the New York offices a copy of the terms under which loans may be insured.

The New York *Herald Tribune* told about the F.S.A.:

> Government relief for storm victims came from another direction when the Farm Security Administration announced it was turning over its facilities in the storm-wrecked areas for immediate relief and rehabilitation of farm families, relief which will include food, clothing, shelter, construction work, loans and grants, both for emergency and long-range rehabilitation.

As soon as possible after the floods, the Soil Conservation Service was forced to make a survey of farm and forest lands. The *Times* reports:

> On the basis of preliminary surveys it appears that the total damage to basic soil resources of the Northeastern states, excluding immediate damage to current crops, will probably reach into millions of dollars. . . . An inspection of farms where adequate soil conservation practises have been adopted showed negligible soil losses and crop injury in comparison with damage on land which had no protection from the impact of wind and rain. Work to speed up conservation practises is being diligently undertaken.

The Stage & Screen

Missouri Legend

"MISSOURI LEGEND" deals with the saga of Jesse James, and if Miss Ginty's Jesse isn't the man as he was in the flesh so much the worse for the flesh. Her Jesse is certainly a bandit and he does kill, though this latter part is scarcely touched upon; but he robs the rich and gives to the poor, including the Widow Weeks, whose home he saves from being taken by a rascally banker. He is the nearest thing America provides in the form of a Robin Hood—that is, he is to Miss Ginty and to the audience which sees her play. Her Jesse is also somewhat of an evangelist and as good a hard-shell Baptist as ever despised a Methodist, and he also has a sense of humor. In short he is a Jesse unregenerate human nature will shed a tear for, and wish in the words of Billy Gashade's song, which closes the play, that "that dirty little coward" hadn't "shot Mr. Howard." So leaving its morality aside we can say that "Missouri Legend" is a veritable piece of Americana, with amusing characterization and salty speech. It is at times a trifle slow-moving for a melodrama, but then it is not really a melodrama, but a comedy of manners, even though rough ones. And it is magnificently acted, with first honors going to Mildred Natwick for her Widow Weeks, closely followed by Jose Ferrer as Billy Gashade, Dean Jagger as Jesse James, Joseph Sweeney as the rascally banker, and Dorothy Gish as Jesse's wife. Mr. McClintic and Mr. Gordon are to be congratulated on presenting this vital story of the frontier. (At the Empire Theatre.)

Two Musicals

"SING OUT THE NEWS" is the answer to "I'd Rather Be Right"—it is a New Deal revue. It is good-natured and on the whole it makes an enjoyable evening, though a few of the sketches are boring. Mr. Rome's music is catchy, rather better than his lyrics. The high point of the show is the sketch where Mayor La Guardia comes into court and shows how a mayor can run everything at once. It is delightfully acted by Philip Loeb, who throughout the other sketches likewise is a tower of strength. He and Mary Jane Walsh are the true stars of the evening. Mr. Loeb is a clown, but an original one, and Miss Walsh can put over a song as well as Ethel Merman, which is saying much. Other effective sketches are the two Negro ones, though rather out of key with the rest of the show, the scene in the park where the little Liberal is arrested for causing a commotion between the children of the rich and those of the embattled communists, and the finales to both acts. (At the Music Box.)

Cole Porter's new musicale, "You Never Know," has some admirable tunes and some admirable actors to atone for a rather thin book. First honors go to Lupe Velez, whose *gamine* personality is irresistible, but praise too must go to Rex O'Malley for his suave acting, to Clifton

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Webb, and for their dancing to the Hartmans and June Preisser. So taken all in all, the show furnishes as much entertainment as the tired business man can desire. The play from which it is taken, "At Candle Light," has too its charm, even though its texture is light. (At the Winter Garden.) GRENVILLE VERNON.

"Where Are the Snows of Yesterday?"

"SWELL!" is the word for "If I Were King." If you accept this picture in the spirit of romance and melodrama that's intended, you'll like it. Frank Lloyd's expert direction of the old Justin Huntly McCarthy play leaves nothing to be asked for; and Ronald Colman's François Villon outshines John Barrymore's and Dennis King's—except that Ronald doesn't sing as he leads his band of rogues, cut-throats, thieves and murderers against the Burgundians. The lines, which are delivered by Mr. Colman with gusto, have been modernized a bit by Preston Sturgis, and the motive of justice for the common people has been pepped up in keeping with these times. "If I Were King" is a rousing, inspiring film that will sweep you along, if you'll let it, especially in those magnificent scenes in which Villon tells the king what he'd do if he'd been born in a brocaded bed, or when Villon recites his poetry, or when the Parisian mobs repel the invaders. The entire cast rallies around Mr. Colman and gives him excellent support, particularly reliable Basil Rathbone who is superb as that "juiceless mold," Louis XI.

Because "Room Service" on the stage was my favorite farce of a couple of seasons ago, and the Marx Brothers are my favorite comedy team, I thought the combination would spell "laugh riot" and the movie would be twice as funny as the play. Well, it just isn't. Somehow the picture misses the rapid fire and speed that George Abbot instilled into his stage production. The Marx Brothers and several of the original cast get right in there and pitch the same clever wisecracks that put the play over. (Harpo of course does his in pantomime.) The story about the theatrical producer who stalls the hotel manager until he can find a backer for his show is just as funny as it was on the stage. But I like the Marx Boys to shoot the works, go the limit with their absurdities. There are no really mad sequences in "Room Service," no scenes so utterly crazy that you can't believe you'll ever laugh so hard again. Oh, well, perhaps next time Groucho and Chico and Harpo will return to their irrelevant fantasies. In the meantime we'll just have to be thankful for seeing them at all and for getting as many laughs as we can out of "Room Service."

Jitterbugs will probably go for "Garden of the Moon" in a big way because Joe Venuti and his Swing Cats play some hot numbers and use a lot of swing lingo. Plain cinema-goers will wonder if it's all worth while as they watch Pat O'Brien, manager of a night club, battle with his orchestra leader, John Payne. Jimmie Fidler flits in and out of the picture; and Margaret Lindsay hangs around to stir up and pour oil on the troubled waters. The music and lyrics are good but the pointless feuds get pretty dull. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Day

The Bonds of Unity

The Whole Christ, by Emile Mersch, S.J.; translated by John R. Kelly, S.J. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company. $5.00.

FATHER MERSCH'S "Le Corps Mystique du Christ" is easily the best work we have on a doctrine that has come strongly to the fore today. He traces the concept of the Mystical Body from the Scriptures through the Greek Fathers and western tradition, down to the pronouncements of Pius XI. The work was hailed as a masterpiece of erudition and clarity when it appeared in 1933 and we are now fortunate in having an English version of the original from the pen of Father Kelly.

When we speak of the Mystical Body of Christ we are using a metaphor to designate the unity that should exist between Christ and all mankind. The secret or "mystery" that was specially commissioned to Saint Paul to reveal was the universal vocation of pagans as well as of Jews in Christ; in fact, all creation is to be brought to a head in Him. The interesting question arises: what is the nature of the bond that links us, the members, to Christ our Head in the Mystical Body? Is it merely a tenuous union of the moral order, based upon love and example, or is there an ontological link, an objective entity, that unites the Head with the members and the members one with another as well as with the Head? It is the answer to this question that Father Mersch is seeking in the pages of Scripture and the tomes of the Fathers.

The Church has made no official pronouncement on this point but the voice of Christian tradition is decisive. To conceive the union as existing only in the moral order would be easy—they are the members of Christ who imitate His example—but facility is not always a test of truth. The union is less than physical—we are not indeed the physical members of Christ—but at the same time it is more than moral, and the term that suits it best is the one that has been consecrated by centuries of usage: mystical.

When however we come to investigate further the nature of this mystical bond, Christian tradition varies and undergoes a process of development. The Fathers of the East, approaching the problem from the point of view of the life-giving Head, see in the Incarnation itself the ground of our union with Christ. This teaching culminates in Saint Cyril of Alexandria. The Fathers of the West on the other hand, principally Saint Augustine, approach the problem from the viewpoint of the needs of the members and put the emphasis upon grace aiding our wills and linking us up with Christ. In either case the Mystical Body in the prolongation of the Incarnation in space and time by means of the supernatural life that flows from the Head to the least of His members.

Chapter VIII of Part Three clarifies the difficult question, who are the members of the Mystical Body? The view of Saint Thomas is as liberal as Saint Paul's: the entire human race and even the angels. All who are capable of receiving life from Christ are His members at least potentially, while actually our membership in the Mystical Body varies in proportion to our proximity to the sanctity of the Head.

The best compliment that can be paid to Father Kelly is to say that his translation reads as smoothly as an

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original text. There is a misprint on page 340, line 24. It is greatly to be regretted that "in order to reduce the size of the book and to make it less forbidding to the lay reader, the long critical and exegetical notes and the exhaustive references and bibliographies have been omitted, together with all appendices" as well as "the splendid preface contributed by Father Lebreton" (xii). Genuine scholarship is no more forbidding to an intelligent American laity than it is to our brethren abroad. In two volumes, complete, the work would have been a worthy companion to Stoddard's translation of Father Prat's "Theology of St. Paul."

The English title is an interpretation rather than a translation and sounds weaker than the original.

In spite of these criticisms this is a "must" book for those who have not access to the original.

WILLIAM R. O'CONNOR.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The Reorganization of State Governments in the United States, by A. E. Buck. New York: Columbia University Press. $2.50.

ANY WORK on the subject of public administration by A. E. Buck is worthy of respect and careful consideration. He is an outstanding student whose opinion is valued highly by specialists in the field. In this work Mr. Buck gives a summary of the principles of governmental reorganization followed by a detailed account of the reorganization in the various states of the Union. The study was promoted by the National Municipal League.

Despite the technical nature of the book, the intelligent citizen should know the story that it tells. One needs only to read the first thirty-eight pages—the "Résumé of State Reorganization Movement and Methods"—to realize the slow and difficult progress of the movement to establish responsible government and orderly administration. The movement has been slow because there is little drama in it to excite and inspire the ordinary voter. It is concerned with budgetary control, public finance, personnel problems, a hundred and one technical questions on functional types and administrative standards, and that very drab matter of efficiency and economy. Picturesque state executives such as Alfred E. Smith and Frank O. Lowden can awaken public interest in such matters by reason of their own dramatic personalities. On the other hand the opponents, politicians who always lose by efficient organization of government, and leaders of the party out of power at the time have had the advantage in defeating beneficial reform by raising the old cries of "undemocratic," "dictatorial," or "contrary to the ideas of Jefferson" and other like emotional catchwords and phrases. Unfortunately there seem to be no effective counter war-cries that can be raised.

Ever since the report of President Taft's Commission on Efficiency and Economy in 1912 the fight has been waged in every state and recently in the nation along the same lines with the same slogans, the same opposition from politicians and legislators who have patronage to lose, the same criticisms from the political "out," and the same charges of autocratic extension of executive power. Each time the struggle assumes the same pattern while the larger number of citizens honestly believe that there has been nothing comparable to it before. The value of Mr. Buck's book for the ordinary reader lies in its calm, objective outline of the principles of administration accepted by all students in the field and in the lesson it holds

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FICTION

Trumpets at Dawn, by Cyril Harris. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

THE ANTIQUARIAN and the history-lover will rejoice more warmly than will the reader of fiction over the present novel, which draws its nourishment from the characters and events of the American Revolution. The discouraging years of the war when Washington's tatterdemalion regiments suffered one defeat after another and grew lean with the dearth of food and basic comforts, are painted in depressing monotone unrelieved by the thin love story but well accented, however, by the vigorous portraits of Washington, "Sandy" Hamilton, Major André (whose collusion with Benedict Arnold is here told with stunning effect), and the sundry other figures, both historical and fictional.

Young Sam Wyatt breaks with his wealthy parents, who loyally support the King, and brings anguish upon them, first by falling in love with Hannah Honeyman, the well-digger's daughter, and then by joining up with the rebels. His sister Kitty also shares the revolutionary enthusiasm of the younger generation, and is attracted to Charles Townsend, Sam's close friend and fellow warrior. The young men partake in the hopeless encounters between the Americans and the much more numerous "lobsterbacks" who, for all their wretched marksmanship, carry on successfully their operations in and about Harlem and Brooklyn. The author is here the fastidious historian, boxing the compass, laying out maneuvers, describing uniforms and guns and powder-horns.

Midway through the war, Charles returns to New York and secretly marries Kitty, for whose benefit her parents had agreed upon an appropriate suitor of loyalist persuasion, but it is not long before the bridegroom is back in the trenches. He and Sam are taken prisoner and brutally mistreated in their New York jail, from which they escape and return to their tasks. Sam distinguishes himself and renders personal service to General Washington in connection with Benedict Arnold's defection. The Americans exult over the unexpected victory accomplished with French assistance over General Cornwallis, and soon the war is ended. Sam is married to Hannah, purchases a farm near Trenton and is repudiated by his ruined parents, who are setting out for Nova Scotia.

"Trumpets at Dawn" is good history but poor fiction, the style is placid and undistinguished, save in certain portions, but the book is a useful contribution to the literature of the Revolution. T. O'CONOR SLOANE III.

Old Haven, by David Cornel DeJong. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.50.

"HE THAT keepeth thee will not slumber," read the text on the calendar on that dreadful night of March 3, 1901, when the sea tumbled over the dike and Tjerk and Maarten were wakened and sent to the church for safety. On that same terrifying night, their brother Klaas was born with a caul over his face, an evil omen for the folk of Witsum on the North Sea; and these folk had two great fears—fear of an angry God and fear of the sea.

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"Old Haven" is the tale of the slow growth into manhood of Tjerk Mellema and of his brothers and his family against the background of Holland's flat country and canals and Witsum's strict Calvinism and narrow prejudices. Leisurely and with modern inclusiveness, David Cornel DeJong unfolds the details that reveal the lives of his many characters. Tjerk's paternal grandmother, Great Beppe, of the rich potentate Mellema clan, who wears a golden helmet, rules the town and un-Calvinistically knows no fear, is certain that Tjerk will remain in Witsum and follow the Mellema building trade. While Tjerk's maternal grandfather Hannia strives to restrict the boy with a cold, unfeeling religion which only forces him to rebellion.

Mr. DeJong's careful analysis of motivation and his building up of incidents lead one to liken this excellent novel to George Eliot's "Mill on the Floss" in which, also, family background, childhood training and early episodes lead to inevitable tragedy. Love of the sea and lack of understanding at home finally bring Maarten to the brawl that lands him in jail where he accepts his fate and plans his life anew. Handsome Klaas cannot help causing disaster because he was born with a caul. And Tjerk, when he is drawn for the military service, sees in the army escape from Witsum where he has been caged in. Witsum, smugly safe during the war, where love and affection must always be hidden, where convention must be obeyed, where the vicious gossiping of mean-spirited villagers often determines the path of one's life. It is to this home town that Tjerk must bring his Antoinette for the blood-thirsty questioning by his people and for his settling down. But it is Antoinette, from southern Holland, who finally saves him from the malignities of Witsum after Klaas's destruction.

The author's knowledge of Holland, the country in which he was born, and his fine English prose style with strong verbs and smooth sentences have resulted in an extremely interesting and well-written novel. No mild old wives' tale is this book—but a rich and complete work with sound descriptions and penetration into the depths of character that have won for Mr. DeJong the Houghton Mifflin Fellowship Prize and should bring him many readers.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

MEMOIRS

Letters of Henry Adams, 1892-1918; edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $4.50.

THE HISTORIC significance of the era subsequent to the American Civil War springs, it would seem, not so much from the fact that it witnessed the conquest and development of vast empires of wealth, rapid growth of railroads, exploitation of amazingly rich mines, acceleration of America's industrialization and her newly found mission for imperial glory. These are tremendously important for an understanding of contemporary America, but their consequence is surely overshadowed by that era's universal attachment to and greater legal implementation of the mythology of anarchy and social disorder, called bourgeois capitalism. For its widespread acceptance spelled the end of the American nation envisioned by the fathers of the republic.

There were not wanting men who rose to protest the debasement of the American social ideals and of these Henry Adams was the most cultured and his pen more illuminating. It is for this reason that the publication of

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TRAVEL

DESCRIPTIVE FOLDERS and information offered those contemplating attending the National Conference of Catholic Charities and Society of St. Vincent de Paul meetings, Richmond, Va., Oct. 8-12. Also the National Eucharistic Congress, New Orleans, Oct. 17. Farley Travel Agency, 535 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

his letters is an event whose importance cannot be overstressed. They are still pertinent today. Henry Adams was not deceived; he understood clearly the meaning of his times and he could not restrain himself from saying, "I detest it and everything that belongs to it." The spectacle of Grant, McKinley, Hanna, Frick, Rockefeller and such like in the saddle meant that the democratic vision of a free and independent America had vanished. As can be inferred, his opinion of the relative merits of these men was not too high. Quoting Dr. Johnson, he remarked, "Sir, there is no settling the precedency between a louse and a flea." Plutocracy was king and its oppressed slaves did its will, sustained by the Horatio Alger dreams of the day when either they or their children would sit in the seats of the mighty.

He did all that he could to stem the tide of the barbarians. He wrote what is perhaps the best American history, a fascinating autobiography, a work on medieval Europe, political tracts; he advised presidents, members of Congress and Cabinets, and served his country at foreign legations. But he died believing that he had failed. The "gold-bug" was the victor. As we look back we can hardly accept in its entirety his pessimistic view. But when he predicted the end of bourgeois civilization, "I apprehend for the next hundred years an ultimate, colossal and cosmic collapse," he was not mistaken. Unlike his contemporaries who found his "line of ideas wholly new and very repugnant," we see about us definite signs of the end of our times. In his return to Saint Thomas Aquinas he showed what must be done for the reconstruction of a greater America. "Saint Thomas and you are my only friends" and "Saint Thomas said all there was to say," were often on his lips.

After a short while one gets to know and love this mature puritan who was not ashamed to sit at the feet of the Angelic Doctor and worship our Blessed Lady, so that it is with sadness that one closes the book, for in the words of Elizabeth Ogden Adams, "To us who loved him and to whom he stood for so much his loss is great, beyond all words to express." JOSEPH CALDERON.

Winged Highway, by William Stephen Grooch. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $2.50.

THE GREAT oceans of the world were long ago conquered by man, first by sail and then by steam. Now the air over parts of these vast stretches, with the exception of the North Atlantic, has its commercial aviation. This story, a struggle for supremacy between nations in the rush for South American trade, is graphically told by the operations manager of one of the early contestants, NYRBA, which at length gave way to Pan American Airways. But before vanishing it had, under the guiding hand of William Grooch, established a competent air line up and down both sides of South America, making the land crossing from Buenos Aires on the east coast to Santiago on the west. From South America Mr. Grooch was sent to China, a land of little mechanical progress, to reproduce the success he had achieved in Latin America. Here he ran into the grand game of poker as played by orientals, by receiving the ultimatum that the line pay 30 percent of gross income from mail and passengers, or lose their flying permit. But being a good player himself, Grooch secured permission from his home office to make a survey flight from Hong Kong to Manila and on the completion of this the Chinese government backed down, making plain sailing from then on.

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Dealing mostly with the author's flying time from the outbreak of the World War, when he joined the navy, this book presents a picture of one of the most astonishing activities of our modern time. As an author, this is Mr. Grooch's second book, the other, "Skyway to Asia," being the story of building air bases across the Pacific. And, if it is permissible to speculate, the story of the North Atlantic and the route to New Zealand, when these are accomplished facts, will be well worth the reading.

PHILIP H. WILLIAMS.

RELIGION

Contemporary Continental Theology, by Walter Marshall Horton. New York: Harper Brothers. $2.00.

THIS is an extremely readable and interesting book. The author seems to be a safe guide through the rapids and vortexes of modern theology. In comparatively few pages he gives an apparently complete survey of all the trends and currents of modern theology on the continent. It is difficult for a priest to judge how non-professionals would enjoy reading it, but I think neither style nor terminology are hard on any intelligent reader, while the frank and candid presentation of the subject-matter wins continued interest.

The only regret I feel concerns the author's views on German Catholic theology. Erich Przywara is often overrated in non-Catholic circles. He has no real following, thanks to his confused style and philosophical system. Hillersberger, Dempf, Adam, Schmaus, Winzen, and especially Guardini are far more representative of Catholic theology, not to speak of the Benedictines of Maria Laach, the Dominican revival and the Jesuit Jungmann. Przywara's attempt to create a synthesis of all that is good in tradition is well meant, but it needs the continuous effort of the above-mentioned men to prepare the way for a new Saint Thomas. Erich Przywara as a poet is a still greater failure. In a new edition of his book Guardini should be given Przywara's prominence not only because he is by far the clearer theologian, the better writer and more comprehensive intellect, but because he has created a school of real influence.

As far as historical theology is concerned, I think Dom Ildefons Herwegen and Dom Odo Casel in Germany, the Louvain school in Belgium and the Dominican revival in France and England cannot easily be overrated.

Of course, seen from the outside, the importance of a school of thought is often judged by its affinity to one's own standpoint or certain startling and captivating peculiarities. As far as I know, Berdyaev's and Father Bulgakoff's speculations have been declared heretical by Moscow and Carlovtzi, and I wonder if it does not represent a Protestant point of view to still consider them representative of a revival of Orthodox Eastern theology.

But the information which this book gives is extremely interesting and it is pleasant to survey the actual spiritual situation under such an able guide. H. A. REINHOLD.

The Faithful Mohawks, by John Wolfe Lydekker. New York: Cambridge University Press. The Macmillan Company. $3.75.

THIS carefully documented volume, by the Archivist of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, gives a needed account of Anglican missionary activities among the Iroquois before and during the American Revolution. Sadly enough, it makes only too precise the political—anti-French—motive for this activity. H. B.

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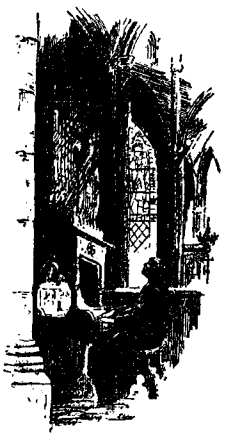

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The Inner Forum

OCTOBER 4 is the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi; its coming calls to mind an old custom signalizing the friendship of Saint Francis and Saint Dominic, those two personalities which were so dissimilar and yet which each in its own way profoundly affected the direction of Christian history. It was probably in the year 1217 that the two saints met in Rome. In any case there was a strong bond of friendship between them which so impressed their followers that it has continued as a tradition up to the present time. The principal outward manifestation of this tradition takes place on the feast days of the two saints. On October 4 in every Dominican house where it is possible the principal Mass is said by Franciscans and the sermon is preached by a Franciscan. On August 4, the feast of Saint Dominic, the procedure is reversed. On both occasions the solemn Mass is followed by a meal at which the minor austerities and disciplines of the religious life are relaxed and the feast is commemorated in good fellowship and hospitality.

It would be a mistake to assume that in every community of both orders this custom is observed. Sometimes geographical considerations make it impossible. Some places may have only one Dominican house and several houses of Franciscans, or vice versa. In this case the oldest of the several houses exchanges with the single community; the others must wait for the establishment of more houses of the other order before they can institute the custom. It makes no difference which order of Franciscans—Capuchins, Conventuals, Friars Minor or Friars of the Atonement—happens to be involved; all keep up this ancient custom. Of course the exchange is limited to the celebration of the principal Mass of the feast; private Masses, weddings, confessions and parochial duties continue to be exercised by their regular ministers. Nor is it possible in populous urban centers, where religious communities nearly always have heavy parish duties to perform, for one community to act as host to all the members of the other community, which would be the ideal. The interchange is usually limited to the three priests who celebrate the Mass and to the preacher, whose subject, naturally, is nearly always the saint of the day.

CONTRIBUTORS

Most Rev. Edwin V. O'HARA, Bishop of Great Falls, Mont., is chairman of the Episcopal Committee on the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

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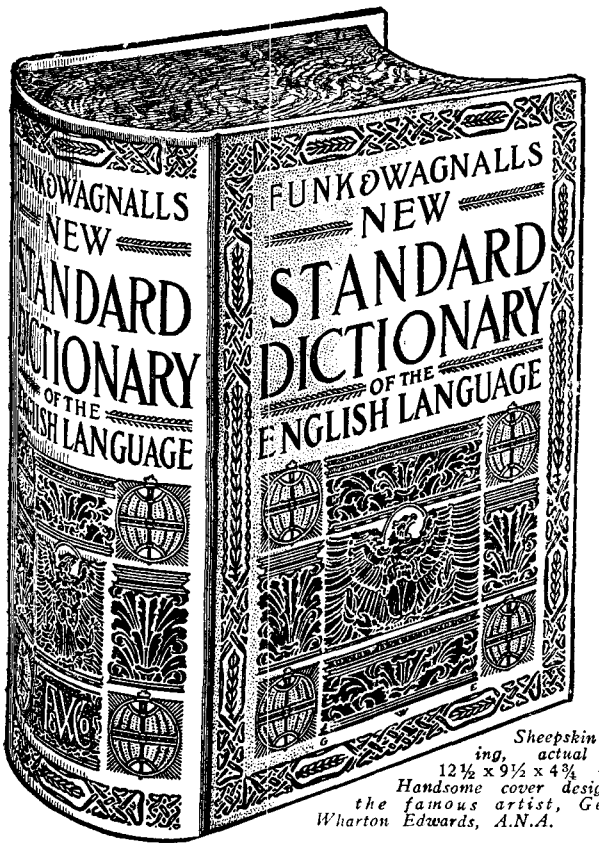

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